

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 8, 9 and 12-16 without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein.

Claims 1-6. (Cancelled).

7. (Previously Presented) An exposure apparatus, comprising:
- an exposure light source;
 - an optical system which directs exposure light from said exposure light source to a photosensitive substrate;
 - a casing which accommodates therein at least one optical element of said optical system;
 - a gas replacing system which supplies a purge gas into said casing to replace a gas inside said casing with the purge gas; and
 - a control system which controls said gas replacing system so as to increase a flow rate of the purge gas if a predetermined time elapses after an exposure is completed and before a next exposure starts.

Claims 8 and 9. (Cancelled).

10. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to Claim 7, wherein said exposure light source comprises an excimer laser.

11. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to Claim 7, wherein the purge gas is an inactive gas.

Claims 12-16. (Cancelled).

17. (Previously Presented) A device manufacturing method, comprising the steps of:

exposing a photosensitive substrate to a pattern by use of an exposure apparatus including: an exposure light source, an optical system which directs exposure light from the exposure light source to a photosensitive substrate, a casing which accommodates therein at least one optical element of the optical system, a gas replacing system which supplies a purge gas into the casing to replace a gas inside the casing with the purge gas, and a control system which controls the gas replacing system so as to increase a flow rate of the purge gas if a predetermined time elapses after an exposure is completed and before a next exposure starts; and developing the photosensitive substrate exposed in said exposing step.